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White House: Republicans Science and Technology Cuts Put New Economy At Risk

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WASHINGTON, June 15 /U.S. Newswire/ -- The following was released today by the White House:

REPUBLICANS SLASH INVESTMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

This year, President Clinton and Vice President Gore have proposed a \$2.9 billion increase for the "Twenty-First Century Research Fund" -- including a \$1 billion increase in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health and double the largest dollar increase for the National Science Foundation in its 50 year history. Although Congress has supported large increases for the National Institutes of Health, Republicans have made cuts in many of President Clinton's proposed research initiatives in other areas - such as information technology, nanotechnology, clean energy, and fundamental research in the physical sciences and engineering.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

American prosperity in the 21st century: Information technology alone accounts for 1/3 of U.S. economic growth, and is generating jobs that pay 85 percent more than the average private sector wage. Technologies developed with government research dollars (the Internet, the first easy-to-use Web browser, ultra-fast optical networks) are now driving the U.S. economy. Despite this, House Republicans have proposed cutting funds for the Administration's information technology initiative in agencies such as the National Science Foundation, DARPA, Energy and NASA. These cuts could undermine America's position as the leader in the high-tech industries of the 21st century -- and could slow down the rates of innovation, growth and productivity. American workers for American jobs: Many high-tech CEOs are reporting that the inability to find enough skilled workers is their number one constraint on growth. Congress is currently considering legislation to allow in more skilled

immigrants. At the same time, by cutting funding for university research at NSF and other agencies, Republicans are reducing support for American graduate students desperately needed by high-tech companies.

Longer, healthier lives for all Americans: Biomedical research is dependent on breakthroughs in other fields, such as advances in supercomputers needed to develop life-saving drugs more rapidly, physics for MRI and other medical imaging technologies, and nanotechnology that could detect cancerous tumors when they are only a few cells in size. Republican cuts in the physical sciences and engineering will prevent breakthroughs that could lead to longer, healthier lives for all Americans. Cleaner energy for a cleaner environment: Research can help America create cleaner sources of energy and energy-efficient technologies, such as fuel cells that emit only water, cars that get 80 miles per gallon, and bioenergy derived from cash crops. Republican cuts to the Department of Energy research budgets would slow down these efforts, hampering Administration efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

CUTTING IMPORTANT INVESTMENTS IN AMERICA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

Republicans have proposed deep cuts to the President's R&D initiatives:

-- National Science Foundation: The House has cut the President's proposed \$675 million increase in the NSF budget by \$508 million - which would cripple new initiatives in information technology research, nanotechnology, and biocomplexity. It will also slow down our efforts to train the next-generation of scientists and engineers, and prepare more Americans for high-tech, high-wage jobs.

-- NASA: The NASA budget has been cut by the House by \$322 million. This will make deep cuts in the President's Space Launch Initiative. This initiative would enable NASA to save money while improving the safety for its astronauts, and enable commercial industry to better compete in the global marketplace.

-- Commerce: The House has eliminated funding for a \$50 million Institute for Information Infrastructure Protection, which would help protect the Nation's networks from cyber-attacks and cyber-terrorism. They have eliminated funding for the \$176 million Advanced Technology Program, which develops cutting-edge technologies in partnership with industry. They have reduced funding for the Patent and Trademark Office, which could result in tens of thousands of patents being denied or delayed. They have also cut Commerce Department initiatives to "bridge the digital divide" by over \$100 million.

-- Defense: The House has cut DARPA's investments in long-term information technology research by over \$60 million. DARPA's investments in computer networking beginning in the late 1960's (the ARPANET) led to today's Internet.

-- Education: Both the House and the Senate have denied the President's request for a \$30 million increase in education research.

These increases would support rigorous research in what educational strategies work and why.

-- Energy: The House cut the President's request for the Department of Energy's science programs by \$320 million, threatening cutting-edge research at universities and National Laboratories. They also reduced funding for solar and renewable energy by providing 35% (\$110 million) less than the President's request. The Spallation Neutron Source project -- a pioneering tool for use in materials and medical sciences -- was cut by \$181 million from the President's request.

-- Agriculture: The House has underfunded the President's requested \$29 million increase for food safety at USDA, which could block the Administration's efforts to prevent needless deaths and illnesses from eggs contaminated with Salmonella.

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